

## **Prayer and Meditation**

(The Morning watch or Quiet time)

The morning watch as it is sometimes referred to, consists of a period of prayer followed by scripture reading. Then there is time spent meditating or reflecting on the passages just read or on His precepts or commandments and then time is spent listening for instructions or guidance. This can be done at any time of the day, but the early morning hours are found to be the best. At this time we are well rested and our minds are not full of the cares, worries and rigors of the day ahead. We are fresh and opened minded.

There are eight elements to an effective morning watch, they are:

- 1) Assigning a definite time first thing in the morning.
- 2) Getting quiet, relaxed, and expectantly patient.
- 3) Reading the Bible and devotionals before two-way prayer begins.
- 4) Praying to God: confession, petition, thanksgiving, intercession.
- 5) Listening for guidance from God.
- 6) Writing down the thoughts received.
- 7) Checking the messages to be sure of true guidance from God.
- 8) Obedience to the guidance received.

Through the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous I have entered into a relationship with my Creator and have developed certain practices that I keep regardless of anything else that may happen throughout my day. **These practices are a simple and effective tool for spiritual growth.** These practices are known as the 11th step of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The eleventh step of the program of alcoholics anonymous suggests: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for the knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

I am going to be brief but at the same time lay out some of the fundamentals of what is the foundation of this 11th step of A.A. First it must be known that all of A.A.'s 12 steps are Biblical in nature. The program of Alcoholics Anonymous is a method of coming into a way of living that places us to be of maximum service to God and the people about us. The co-founders of A.A. have stated several times in speeches and books that the underlying philosophy behind all the steps can be traced to several different scriptures.

Here is a basic guide to the 11th step of Alcoholics Anonymous.

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Meditate in the word of God.

Miriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, tenth edition, defines "meditate" in terms of engaging in contemplation or reflection and, when directed at an object, "to focus one's thoughts on, pondering over." Thus when the bible speaks of "meditating," as it often does, it is speaking of focusing thoughts on, pondering over, and studying *the word of God*. The following are some of the many verses which speak of "meditating" on God, His work, and His word. The word of God is variously referred to as His word, His commandments, His precepts, His teachings, His statutes, and His law:

34 My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD. (Psalm 104:34)

12 I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings. 13 Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God? 14 Thou art the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people. (Psalm 77:12-14)

2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. (Psalm 1:2-3)

97MEM. O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.

98Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. 99 I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.(Psalm 119:91-99)

15 I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. 16 I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word. (Psalm 119:15-16)

78Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause: but I will meditate in thy precepts.(Psalm 119:78)

48 My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes.(Psalm 119:48)

148 Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word.(Psalm 119:148)

When the Old Testament spoke of meditation, it described a thinking process which focused thoughts on, pondered, and studied about God, His works, and His word. And in addressing Timothy, Paul warned against seducing spirits and doctrines of devils with lies in hypocrisy. He urged the word of God and prayer and the rejection of profane and old wives fables. He urged reading, exhortation, and doctrine. (see 1 Timothy ch:4.) He concluded:

15 Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. 16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.( 1 Timothy 4:15-16)

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The sources used for reference for this handout on the morning quiet time are several pamphlets from the Oxford group, a first century Christian Fellowship, and the co-founders of Alcoholics Anonymous Dr. Bob Smith and Bill Wilson.

The Oxford Group believed one must surrender to God, not only to be “converted” from sin, but to have his entire life controlled by God. They believed in “Quiet time,” or meditation, during which a believer would get guidance of what to do or in as to the direction he should take. They believed in open confession of sins, one-to-another, Following James 5:16 in the scriptures. They believed in the healing of the soul in carrying the message of personal and world-wide redemption through the sharing of members testimony by witnessing.

The Oxford Group believed that people had sick souls, most of which was caused by “self-centeredness.” They believed that people were powerless over this human condition, this defect of the soul. To recover one had to admit he was separated from God and his fellow man, and that God could manage their lives. Then they made a decision to turn their lives over to the care and direction of God. They had to make an inventory of their lives and of their sins, and to make full restitution to others, those they had hurt by their sins, or shortcomings. They also had to witness to others as to their own conversion from sin and be available to convert others from sin. Oxford Group members believed and were taught that the only way you could keep what you had been given by God, was to give it away to another. They did not try to force anyone into their path. They were to live their lives as an example, which would inspire others to want to follow.

The Oxford Group held certain theological beliefs, including the following:

- 1) Sovereignty and Power of God
- 2) The reality of sin.
- 3) The need for complete surrender to the will of God.
- 4) Christ’s atoning sacrifice and transforming power.
- 5) The sustenance of prayer.
- 6) The duty to witness to others.

It’s beliefs included other elements added as the movement grew and became more popular. Examples are as the belief that an experience in Christ would transform a believer, if he truly believed, beyond anything he had dreamed possible. The belief that an adherent could and should make prompt restitution for personal wrongs revealed to him by his life-changing experience. They also believed that their followers should have a formula for checking their motives in following this new path. Part of the checking procedure involved the Four Absolutes; Honesty, Unselfishness, Purity and Love. The Oxford Group believed that these were the four absolute standards of Jesus. We mention the absolutes in the basic text of Alcoholics Anonymous. A.A. members knew that no one could ever hope to attain the perfection of absolute anything. They instead were told to strive for perfection, as their guide to spiritual progress, knowing that they would never fully attain it. (*Exert By A.A. member Mitchell K. From his book on Clarence H. Snyder, one of the original members of A.A. who took part in the writing of the book Alcoholics Anonymous.*)

Quite simply, Alcoholics Anonymous was formed on the underlying philosophies of the Oxford Group, All biblical and centered on: “*Surrender as much of yourself as you can to as much of God as you understand Him to be. God will come through to you, make Himself known, and enable you to understand more. You will come to believe. You will find God.*”(Samuel M. Shoemaker, jr. was an Episcopal rector at Calvary Church in New York and later in Pittsburgh. He was dubbed by A.A.’s Bill Wilson as a “co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous.”)

## **Prayer and Meditation** (The Morning watch or Quiet time)

The Oxford Group and Alcoholics Anonymous, as it was intended to be, were people who were trying to the best of their ability to serve God. The focus of this handout is going to be on the 11th step of Alcoholics Anonymous with an in-depth look at the morning watch. As with all the steps of A.A. there are some suggestions that we need to follow. God will constantly guide us if we are willing to accept His guidance and to the best of our ability live up to the four absolutes.

*Step Eleven* suggests prayer and meditation. We shouldn't be shy on this matter of prayer. Better men than we are using it constantly. It works, if we have the proper attitude and work at it. It would be easy to be vague about this matter. Yet, we believe we can make some definite and valuable suggestions. (pg. 85-86 *Big Book or basic text, Alcoholics Anonymous.*)(BBBTAA).

Let's start with how we begin our day and take it through the suggestions of how to end our day. We will be putting our emphasis on the morning Quiet time as this is where we get our guidance for our conduct throughout the day.

*On awakening* let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead. We consider our plans for the day. Before we begin WE ASK GOD to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives. Under these conditions we can employ our mental faculties with assurance, for after all God gave us brains to use. Our thought-life will be placed on a much higher plane when our thinking is cleared of wrong motives.

In thinking about our day we may face indecision. We may not be able to determine which course to take. Here WE ASK GOD for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision. We relax and take it easy. We don't struggle. We are often surprised how the right answers come after we have tried this for a while. What used to be the hunch or the occasional inspiration gradually become a working part of the mind. Being still inexperienced and having just made conscious contact with God, it is not probable that we are going to be inspired at all times. We might pay for this presumption in all sorts of absurd actions and ideas. Nevertheless, we find that our thinking will, as time passes, be more and more on the plane of inspiration. We come to rely upon it.

We usually conclude the period of meditation with A PRAYER that we be shown all through the day what our next step is to be, that we be given whatever we need to take care of such problems. WE ASK especially for freedom from self-will, and are careful to make no request for ourselves only. WE MAY ASK for ourselves, however, if others will be helped. We are careful never to pray for our own selfish ends. Many of us have wasted a lot of time doing that and it doesn't work. You can easily see why.

If circumstances warrant, we ask our wives or friends to join us in morning meditation. If we belong to a religious denomination which requires a definite morning devotion, we attend to that also. If not members of religious bodies, we sometimes select and memorize A FEW SET PRAYERS which emphasize the principles we have been discussing. There are many helpful books also. (pg. 86-87 BBBTAA.)

These are the basic suggestions for the Morning Watch or Quiet Time used by the Oxford Group and later adopted by the pioneers of Alcoholics Anonymous. Not only were they asking for guidance for the day ahead, but this was also the time they would take any particular problem that they needed answers to.

*In meditation*, WE ASK GOD what we should do about each specific matter. The right answer will come, if we want it. (pg. 69 BBBTAA.)

### **1) Assigning a definite time first thing in the morning.**

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The early morning hours were found to be the best. At this time we were well rested and our minds were not full of the cares, worries and rigors of the day ahead. we were fresh and opened minded.

*The morning watch with God is the surest guarantee of progress...If I appear to stand exactly where I did a year ago, it must mean that I have been missing all those things which God was waiting to teach and give me.*

The stress on this watch with God as the morning watch is of vital importance...It is the time when we are most free from distractions...The early morning is also the time when our psychological make-up which makes us peculiarly susceptible to deeper intuitions in our first minutes of re-awakened consciousness.(*Jack C. Winslow "When I Awake." He was an Oxford Group writer on Oxford Group principles.*)

*We want to know that God can and does speak directly to the human heart. The reason why some of us believe in guidance, at least in theory, is that the Old and New Testaments are full of instances of it, specific as you please. Men said clearly that they were guided of God in this and that act and decision. You may try to psychologize all this away if you want; but I prefer to see whether this sort of thing is not now possible to those who put their trust in God entirely...It goes without saying that such a period is best in the early morning, while the body and mind are fresh and rested, the perceptions clear and unclouded, and the day is before us. We shall want to stop more than once in the day for further direction, especially with others about problems which concern them and us. But nothing makes up for our own private time alone with the living God. (Samuel M. Shoemaker jr. "The conversion of the church.")*

*It is not necessary to make long prayers, but it is essential to be much alone with God; waiting at His door; hearkening for His voice; lingering in the garden of scripture for the coming of the Lord God in the dawn or cool of the day. No number of meetings, no fellowship with Christian friends, no amount of Christian activity can compensate for the neglect of the still hour.(F.B. Meyer, "The secret of guidance." He was a popular evangelist.)*

*Daily Quiet Time.* This cannot be emphasized too much. Not a day should be missed. The early morning hours are best. It may be that more than one quiet time will be needed during the day. Whenever need arises one should stop and pray and listen. The method of holding quiet time varies some with each individual. All include prayer and Bible reading and study and patient listening to God.(*From Anne Smith's journal. Anne was Dr. Bob's wife and is considered by historians to be a co-founder of A.A. Bill Wilson referred to her as the mother of A.A. Notes from her journal taken from the Oxford Group became the basis for A.A.'s Spiritual program.*)

*He (an alcoholic) must have devotions every morning-a "quiet time" of prayer and some reading from the Bible and other religious literature. Unless this is faithfully followed, there is grave danger of backsliding...The A.A. members of that time did not consider meetings necessary to maintain sobriety. They were simply "desirable." Morning devotion and "quiet time," however, were musts.(Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers, A biography with recollections of early A.A. in the Midwest.)*

The following are some scripture that deal with the morning watch:

1 Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation. 2 Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray. 3 My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.(Psalm 5:1-3)

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16 But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble.(Psalm 59:16)

13 But unto thee have I cried, O LORD; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee.  
(Psalm 88:13)

1 It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: 2 To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night,  
(Psalm 92:1-2)

**2)Getting quiet, relaxed and expectantly patient.**

*Shoemaker and the others* who taught AA's, often talked about "Shutting the door." The morning time for bible study, reading, prayer, listening, and checking was to be done in an unhurried, relaxed, quiet, peaceful setting.(*Dick B. "Good Morning"*)

*Have a definite* place where you can be alone to concentrate on heavenly thoughts even surrounded by others amid real confusion. It is an art to become unmindful of others when absorbed in communion. Seek the out of doors frequently to feel the holy hush of nature newly born. Make your bedroom a gateway into His presence. Shut the door on the world and all that would distract. Closet yourself with the Lord Jesus. Let nothing on your part make such intimacy difficult.(*Donald W. Carruthers,"How to Find Reality in Your Morning Devotions."*)

The stance of the believer was to be one of rest, patience, stillness, waiting upon God in silence, expecting God to do the directing.

The following are some scripture that deal with a quiet, peaceful, relaxed stance:

10 Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.(Psalm 46:10)

7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.(Psalm 37:7)

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.(Philippians 4:6-7)

**3) Reading the bible and devotionals before two-way prayer begins.**

Oxford Group people and Sam Shoemaker agreed with Dr. Bob's wife Anne that "*the Bible* ought to be the main source book of all. No day ought pass without reading it."(Anne Smith's journal.)

*Read and know* the Bible, and all else including public worship, will fall into place.(*Samuel M. Shoemaker,jr. "Realizing Religion."*)

*Since A.A's. and* their spiritual teachers regarded the bible as the general or universal will of God, they hardly expected one to seek the will of God without studying and knowing the Word of God.(*Dick B. "Good Morning."*)

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The following are some scripture that deal with reading and studying the Bible:

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth(2 Timothy 2:15)

39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.( John 5:39)

20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (2 Peter 1:20-21)

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: (2 Timothy 3:16)

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.(Matthew 22:29)

**4) Praying to God: Confession, petition, thanksgiving, intercession.**

*This was often referred to as two way prayer by the Oxford Group and early A.A's. Prayer was talking to God; but the dominant aspect was listening.(Dick B. "Good Morning.")*

*(a) opening moments of silent adoration:"Our spirit bows in humble and thankful adoration before our Creator. (b) Praise and thanksgiving: "we praise God for all that He is in Himself. We thank Him for all that He has done, is doing, and will do." (c) The daily surrender: "A simple act of will, by which we once again yield ourselves completely to the Divine will, that God may direct and use us all the day through.This it is--since He will never force us--which makes us available to Him. (d) Intercession: 'My own usual practice is to restrict my early morning intercessions to people for whom I wish to pray, and it is a part of the morning watch that I would not on any account let go. (e) The prayer for attention:"Speak Lord for thy servernt heareth. (Jack C. Winslow "When I Awake.")*

*Let great prayers help you to pray. There comes a time in private prayer when we want to talk to God out of our own hearts, and in our own words. But the prayers of others will help us to do this. As we fill those ancient and modern and universal prayers with our own needs, they will live for us, and help us to lift up our hearts to God.(Samuel M. Shoemake,jr. "The conversion of the church."*

The following are some scripture that deal with prayer:

41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.(Matthew 26:41)

20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; (Ephesians 5:20)

16 Rejoice evermore. 17 Pray without ceasing. 18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

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5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. (James 1:5)

2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; (Colossians 4:2)

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, (Ephesians 6:18-19)

**5) Listening for guidance from God.** (Or receiving revelation from God.)

Listening for messages from God was considered an asset in the Oxford Group which found its way into page after page of AA's big book

*God has a plan.* God speaks. But if He is to be heard and His plan is to be known and carried out, man must listen. That means a new approach to God for many of us. Our attitude when we have prayed has been, "Listen, Lord for thy servant speaketh." Our prayer has been what Canon Streeter classifies as "pagan" prayer-the attempt to bend God to our desires and make Him the servant of our needs...Prayer, when it consists of this one-sided address by us to God, becomes increasingly unreal and is eventually dropped or only formally retained. Christian prayer begins with the desire to know God's will for us...The promise that our petitions will be answered is only to those who have first placed themselves in line with His will. If God is to become for us the living, active God, at work directing our life and the world's, it is vital that we should learn how to listen. There is one condition that must be fulfilled before we begin. We must be willing to hear anything God says to us...The important thing is for us to make, each for himself, the thrilling discovery, that God has spoken to us. Once we have made this discovery, God will shape our "quiet times" and develop them until they express a full personal relationship with Him, and include our thanksgiving, worship, petition, intercession, as part of our life with Him...This does not mean that, when we have a "quiet time" we resign our reasoning powers. The idea that listening to God means making your mind a blank is a curious misconception which has hindered many people. It does mean that you leave room for God to lead you beyond your human thoughts, and tell you things you could never know yourself. The next thing we shall find is that we are able better to interpret God's other ways of speaking to us through circumstances, through other people, through the Bible. We are learning to know His voice in our "quiet time," and we recognize it better elsewhere.(*Cecil Rose "When Man Listens."*)

*It so happens quite often that in contemplating on a part (of the Lord's Prayer) or one of the petitions, I come into such rich thoughts that I let all the other (petitions) alone. And when such rich and good thoughts come one ought to stop all other Prayers and make room for such thoughts listening quietly and hindering them by no means...And as I have said before about the Lord's prayer I say again: In case the Holy Spirit should come among such thoughts and should begin to reach into your heart with rich and illuminating thoughts, then do homage to Him and let your own thoughts behind. Be still and listen to Him, who knows better than you. And keep in mind what He preaches and write it down. Then you will experience miracles.(*Elanor Napier Forde (Newton), "The guidance of God."*)*

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*Obey exactly* and immediately the commands of the inner still small voice. It can be recognized by the fact that it never alters, never asks questions, but is always direct and explicit. Often it asks for an obedience which is against, or above, what we might naturally feel disposed to give. Listen to that still small voice—the voice of the Spirit of God...(*F.B.Meyer, "Five Musts."*)

The following are some scripture that deal with listening to God:

11 And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: 12 And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. (1 Kings 19:11-12)

33 Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. 34 Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.(Proverbs 8:33-34)

8 Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee. (Psalm 143:8)

### **6) Writing down the thoughts received.**

*Most of us find* it indispensable to have a loose -leaf notebook, in which to write down the things which come to us. We find that in trying to remember what has come before, we block what is coming now: we find it impossible to remember sometimes the things which come even in a brief Quiet Time. The Chinese have a saying that “the strongest memory is weaker than the weakest ink.” We do not want to forget the slightest thing that God tells us to do: and I have sometimes had a rush of detailed guidance which came almost as fast as I could write it.(*Samuel M. Shoemaker jr, "The Conversion of The Church."*)

*Fix the results of your praying* by writing down what comes to you. Many thoughts pass through your mind as you wait listening before God. Some are more important, some less; but writing them down will help you remember them, so that you can carry them out. Bishop Slattery, in some notes he made for an address, wrote, “Prayer-Notebook-Wait-Listen-Write down what is given you.” Take plenty of time for this, so as not to be hurried, or skimp your time with God. Twenty minutes at least every morning for listening prayer.(*Samuel M. Shoemaker jr. "How to find God."*)

*Many find it a real help* to write down the ideas and thoughts which the Holy Spirit has caused to arise in the mind. The advantage of this is two-fold: it is an aid to concentration and acts as a reminder of duties to be performed. It is also of value in checking at the close of the day the thoughts received each morning and throughout the day.(*Howard J. Rose, "How can God Guide Me."*)

### **7) Checking the messages to be sure of true guidance from God.**

*The reason for “checking”* is quite understandable; and-for Oxford Group people-essential if one is not to go awandering, telling himself and others that “God told me,” when in fact the thoughts and guidance did not come from God.(*Dick B. "Good Morning."*)

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The true and living God will never steer us into trouble; hence thoughts from God will be good thoughts.

*For sinners only* laid out in detail the Oxford Group suggestions for making sure that “guidance” was from God, and not from some other source. The tests as to the guidance received were:

- 1) Does it go counter to the highest standards of belief that we already possess?
- 2) Does it contradict the revelations which Christ has already made in or through the Bible?
- 3) Is it absolutely honest, pure, unselfish, loving?
- 4) Does it conflict with our real duties and responsibilities to others?
- 5) If still uncertain, wait and continue in prayer, and consult a trustworthy friend who believes in the guidance of the Holy Spirit. (*A.J. Russel, “For Sinners Only.”*)

*Of course, every* thought that comes to us in the “quiet time” is not God’s guidance. We need to test the voices that come to us along a line that has been so long disused or blocked. We have immediate cause to reject promptings which conflict with what we already know of His will. Nothing which is unloving, Impure, dishonest, or selfish comes from God. Other suggestions which come to us may have to be talked out with some experienced person who knows how to listen to God. In other cases we may have to wait for clearer conviction in our own minds. Sometimes the only test is to make the venture and act. We shall make mistakes. But an honest mistake is of far more use to God than the timid inaction which makes no venture. (*Cecil Rose “When Man Listens.”*)

The following are some scripture that deal with checking guidance from God:

14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. 15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. 16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. (James 3:14-17)

16 Do not err, my beloved brethren. 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. (James 1:16-17)

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: 20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (2 Peter 1:19-21)

18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. 19 Quench not the Spirit. 20 Despise not prophesyings. 21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. 22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

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23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.(1 Thessalonians 5:18-23)

**8) Obedience to the guidance received.**

*Obey exactly* and immediately the commands of the inner still small voice. It can be recognized by the fact that it never alters, never asks questions, but is always direct and explicit. Often it asks for an obedience which is against, or above, what we might naturally feel disposed to give. Listen to that still small voice-the voice of the Spirit of God...(F.B.Meyer, "Five Musts.")

*A moral experiment* is worth ten times an intellectual investigation in apprehending spiritual truth. Obedience is as much the organ of spiritual understanding as reason. Many people have come into a personal and living faith by trying the experiment which is implied in: "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know."( Samuel M. Shoemaker, "Religion That Works.")

*Alcoholics Anonymous* "program of action"and the Oxford Groups program for change were based on the idea that one could hear from God and receive the benefits of God's guidance when one obeyed God's known directives, whether they were set out in the Bible itself or received through messages from God. The key to listening was starting the experiment by making a decision, finding and forsaking the faults, righting the wrongs, and then tuning in to God.(Dick B. "Good Morning .")

*God alone can* change human nature. The secret lies in that great forgotten truth that when man listens, God speaks; when man obeys, God acts.(frank N.D. Buchman, "Remaking The World.")

6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.(Proverbs 3:6)

17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. (John 7:17)

**Continuing the 11th step suggestions:**

*The 10th step* (of A.A.) suggests we continue to take personal inventory and continue to set right any new mistakes as we go along. We vigorously commenced this way of living as we cleaned up the past. We have entered the world of the Spirit. Our next function is to grow in understanding and effectiveness. This is not an overnight matter. It should continue for a lifetime. Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear. When they crop up, WE ASK GOD to remove them. We discuss them with someone immediately and make amends quickly if we have harmed anyone. Then we resolutely turn our thoughts to someone we can help. Love and tolerance is our code.(pg.84 BBBTAA)

As we go through our day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, WE ASK for the right thought or action. We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves **many times each day** "THY WILL NOT MY WILL BE DONE." We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity, or foolish decisions. We become much more efficient. We do not tire so easily, for we are not burning up energy foolishly as we did when we were trying to arrange life to suit ourselves.

It works-it really does.(pg. 87-88 BBBTAA) This needs no further explanation!

**Prayer and Meditation**  
(The Morning watch or Quiet time)

The guidance that is given us in our morning watch as well as the suggestions in step ten is what brings us to the last part of step eleven. This is where our conduct is measured up to the four absolutes. This is the time that we look at where we have fallen short in our striving for perfection, then take certain actions to grow spiritually.

*When we retire at night*, we constructively review our day. Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid? Do we owe an apology? Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once? Were we kind and loving toward all? What could we have done better? Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time? Or were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life? But we must be careful not to drift into worry, remorse or morbid reflection, for that would diminish our usefulness to others. After making our review WE ASK GOD's forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken.(pg. 86 BBBTAA)

God has made it very clear in His word that part of our faith was believing that what we ask of Him will be given us. We know that the stipulation is that we must be, to the best of our ability, obeying His Commandments. We also know that what we ask of Him must be in accordance with His will and completely free of selfishness.

22 And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. (Matthew 21:22)

24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. (Mark 11:24)

14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.(1 John 5:14-15)

16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.(James 5:16)

*God will constantly* disclose more to you and to us. Ask Him in you morning meditation what you can do each day for the man who is still sick. The answers will come, If your own house is in order. But obviously you cannot transmit something you haven't got. See to it that your relationship with Him is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others. This is the Great Fact for us.

Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to Him and to your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of the past. Give freely of what you find and join us. We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny.

May God bless you and keep you--until then.(pg. 164 BBBTAA)

I hope that this might be helpful to anyone who might be interested and stumble upon this guide. Only by the grace of God!

A Recovered Alcoholic